(b) and (c) There have been suggestions from some countries, including the United States, about the possible role of dialogue in reduction of tension. India remains committed to resuming bilateral dialogue with Pakistan in the spirit of Simla Agreement and Lahore Declaration. However, Pakistan must stop its sponsorship of cross border terrorism against India for any meaningful dialogue to be held. Members of the international community generally understand India's position.

Illegal Immigration of Indians to West European countries

2279. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there had been a sudden jump in the number of cases of illegal immigration of Indian citizens to West European countries *via* Poland through Moscow;

(b) if so, the number of persons repatriated by those countries during the last one year;

(c) whether the agents who were involved in this racket have been arrested;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) what action Government have taken against the persons who tried to reach those countries illegally?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) According to the information made available to our Embassy in Poland by the local authorities, there has been asharp increase in the number of persons, reported to be Indian nationals who have been detained for illegal entry into Poland or trying to enter Germany illegally from Poland in 2002.

(b) In 2002,17 Indian nationals, who had entered Poland illegally were sent back to India. Our Embassy in Moscow has so far helped repatriate 31 persons in 2002 to lndia from Europe and Cuba *via* Moscow.

(c) and (d) The detainees/deportees normally refuse to divulge the names of the agents. Whenever the name of the agent has been indicated, the information has been conveyed to the concerned State authorities in lndia for further necessary action.

(e) As soon as information is received from the local Government about the detention of illegal immigrants, who claim to be Indian nationals, embassy officials are deputed to the respective detention centre to determine their Indian nationality. After their Indian nationality has been established, steps are taken to issue them travel documents to enable their deportation to India. The concerned Indian authorities are informed of ttieir deportation.

Indian citizens detained in Pakistani jails

†2280. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) w/hether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item under the caption, "Bhartiya Jasoos Ki Jaan Dene Ki Dhamki", published in the "Dainik Jagran" dated the 15th August, 2002;

(b) if so, the time since when more than 1300 Indians are detained in the Pakistani jails;

(c) the steps taken by Government to get them released; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) As per available information, 1292 Indian nationals, including 360 fishermen and 54 missing defence personnel, are believed to be in Pakistani custody for varying duration. Government have consistently taken up the'issue of their release and repatriation with the Government of Pakistan. As a result, 348 detainees Including 281 fishermen were provided consular access by Pakistan Government during this year.Their release and repatriation is being pursued with the Government of Pakistan.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.